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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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March 18, 2004

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**APPROVAL TO AMEND LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE, TITLE 11,
HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE
(All Districts) (3 Votes)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve the attached amendments to Los Angeles County Code, Title 11, as prepared by County Counsel, to be effective 30 calendar days after passage of this ordinance.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF THE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

In approving the recommended actions, the Board is:

1. Repealing, in its entirety, Section 11.20.410, thereby removing the current restriction which limits the Director of Health Services' authority to inspect housing courts only during daytime hours; and
2. Establishing Section 11.20.420 that would require an owner of a housing court to post a placard displaying the name, address and telephone number of the local health office, as well as the web site address for the Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division, Housing Inspection program.

This ordinance also contains certain technical, non-substantive corrections.

Department of Health Services (DHS), Environmental Health Division (EH) performs State-mandated services related to food, housing, water, liquid and solid waste, and vectors under the authority of the Director of Health Services. State health and safety codes and the Los Angeles County Code provide for the authority to carry out regulatory activities, which include housing

court inspections. Housing courts are identified as multiple dwelling units of five or more, such as apartment buildings and condominiums. DHS' Environmental Health has eight housing districts, each responsible for the routine inspection of licensed multiple dwelling units and for responding to housing complaints within its jurisdiction.

EH staff inspect housing courts for vermin, water, plumbing, sanitation and structural violations of State and local health codes. Any violations observed during the inspection are listed in an official inspection report that is issued to the property owner with a compliance date. Presently, Los Angeles County Code section 11.20.410 limits the inspection of housing courts to between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. By removing the limitation, staff will be able to inspect individual housing units during hours when working tenants are more likely to be present, thus allowing access to the unit for inspection and eventual abatement of any existing health and safety code violations.

Recommendation No. 2, the establishment of a requirement that owners of a housing court post a placard with relevant information, is an attempt to increase the accessibility of housing offices to tenants and the general public. By identifying the district office responsible for the housing court, the placard directs tenants, as well as the public, to the address and telephone number of the district office where complaints may be reported and copies of inspections are available. In addition, the placard will display the EH website address.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

Approval of the attached ordinance provides the DHS customers with expanded service and the public with easy access to information and service by telephone or through the Internet.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

The initial cost for the printing and distribution of the placards in the first fiscal year of implementation is estimated at approximately \$95,000. The recovery of this cost is provided by the Los Angeles County Code through permit or license fees that are required of housing courts, and this additional cost will be included in the upcoming DHS' Environmental Health fee package that shall be submitted for Board consideration.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

On November 25, 2003, the Board approved several motions, concerning the DHS housing inspection program. This recommended ordinance with its changes to the County code, is part of the overall recommendations being implemented to improve the housing inspection program.

At DHS' request, County Counsel prepared and approved the attached ordinance that contains two amendments to Los Angeles County Code, Title 11, Health and Safety. The first amendment would eliminate the section in the County code that limits the inspection of housing to the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Repealing the section would not remove the director of health services' authority to inspect housing to enforce State and local codes, ordinances, regulations or statutes. That right of entry authority would still exist in State health and safety codes and in other sections of the Los Angeles County Code.

The second amendment would establish a requirement for owners of housing courts to post a placard in an area accessible by all tenants and the general public. The placard would display the name, address and telephone number of the local health office, as well as the web site address for the Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division, Housing Inspection Program. These placards would be provided to housing court owners or managers as routine inspection are conducted. Attached is a sample of the proposed placard.

Finally, the approval of the second amendment by your Board will allow for enforcement of the requirement to post the placard in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Enforcement within incorporated cities will require individual adoptions.

CONTRACTING PROCESS:

Not applicable.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Under recommendation number 1, DHS' Environmental Health Division will have the ability to extend service hours.

Negative Declaration/Environmental Impact Reports:

Not applicable.

Conclusion:

Following final adoption of the ordinance, the Department will contact the contract cities and work with the city governments to ensure County-wide adoption of the placard-posting requirements of the second amendment.

It is requested that the Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors return the adopted ordinance and stamped letter with four certified copies to the Director of Environmental Health at 5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, California 91706.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

TLG:dc

Attachments (2)

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller

Amend County Code.DOC

PUBLIC NOTICE

This building is inspected by the
Department of Health Services, Environmental Health.
All public health questions/concerns regarding this property
should be directed to:



Metro Housing Office
3530 Wilshire Bl., 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 351-7896

Please contact the office listed above to report health code
violations or concerns. Copies of inspection reports can be
requested from this office.

For a Complete List of Housing Inspections Visit Our Web Site
<http://www.lapublichealth.org/housing>
24 Hour Complaint Hot Line : (888) 700-9995